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THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

UNION MEETING,

HELD AT

BREWSTER'S HALL,

OCTOBER 24, 1850.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE
"UNION SAFETY COMMITTEE."

NEW HAVEN:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM H. STANLEY.

1851.

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THE

GREAT UNION MEETING,

AT NEW HAVEN.

An earnest desire having been expressed by many of the citizens of New Haven, that the sentiments of the great mass of our people, in reference to the compromise or peace measures, recently passed by Congress, should be embodied in some tangible form and made public, as a matter of justice to themselves, and for the purpose of cheering the hearts and strengthening the hands of the friends of the Union in every part of our wide-spread and glorious confederacy, a number of preliminary meetings were held in the Common Council Chamber, a call for a great public meeting agreed upon, and all the necessary arrangements made efficiently to carry out the desired object.

On the evening of December 24, A. D. 1850, a large audience, composed of our most substantial citizens, assembled in BREWSTER'S HALL, and though heretofore differing as widely from each other in their political views as in their pursuits, but one thought, one sentiment, one feeling prevailed—that of fidelity to the Constitution and its Compromises, and a faithful adherence to the Laws—while a single prayer for the perpetuity of the Union was wafted silently to Heaven. The voice of that Meeting is the voice of New Haven—it spoke the true sentiments of our citizens; and as it goes abroad through our State, breaking the stillness of the valleys, and echoing among the hills, we trust that answering voices will every where come back to us, declaring in no doubtful language that THE UNION MUST AND SHALL BE PRESERVED.

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THE CALL, AND SIGNATURES.

The undersigned, believing that any alteration of the COMPROMISE MEASURES adopted at the last Session of Congress, is not only *inexpedient*, but that it is the duty of every good citizen of this Republic to SUPPORT and VINDICATE the same; do therefore recommend, that a public meeting of the Citizens of this place, WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF PARTY, be convened, to express our united determination; that the same shall be executed to their fullest extent, and our united opposition to any further agitation of the subject, or the subject of slavery in any form.

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PROCEEDINGS

AT

BREWSTER'S HALL.

On the evening of the 24th inst., a large audience was convened in Brewster's Hall, and at the appointed hour, JAMES BREWSTER, Esq. called the meeting to order. C. Atwater, Jr., Esq., announced on behalf of the Committee of Arrangements, the following officers of the meeting:

President.

HON. DENNIS KIMBERLY.

Vice Presidents.

1. CHAS. A. INGERSOLL,
2. NATH'L. W. TAYLOR,
3. JOEL HINMAN,
4. ELEAZAR K. FOSTER,
5. WILLIAM H. ELLIS,
6. JAMES BREWSTER,
7. ALFRED BLACKMAN,
8. JOSEPH E. SHEFFIELD,
9. SIDNEY BABCOCK.
10. NATHAN SMITH,
11. WM. WELLES HOLLY,
12. STEPHEN GILBERT,
13. MINOTT A. OSBORN,
14. WILLIS BRISTOLL,
15. JAMES E. ENGLISH,
16. WILLIAM H. ELLIOTT,
17. WM. S. CHARNLEY,
18. HENRY TROWBRIDGE,
19. WM. A. REYNOLDS,
20. RUSSELL HOTCHKISS,
21. FREDERICK CROSWELL,
22. GEORGE HOADLEY,
23. GUY C. HOTCHKISS,
24. STEPHEN D. PARDEE,
25. HENRY HOOKER,
26. ROSWELL J. BROWN,
27. EZRA C. REED,
28. JAMES PUNDERFORD,
29. HENRY PECK,
30. JAMES M. VEADER,
31. WILLIAM M. WHITE.

Secretaries.

1. JOHN GALPIN,
2. H. J. MORTON,
3. SAMUEL S. BASSETT,
4. CHARLES W. ALLEN,
5. BURTON MALLORY,
6. LEWIS B. JUDSON.

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Gen. KIMBERLY, upon taking the chair, was loudly cheered, and addressed the meeting as follows:

FELLOW CITIZENS:—It will be sufficient, perhaps, in reference to the objects of this meeting, that I refer to the *call* which has been made, which probably you have all seen and which indeed most of you must have signed, as it purports, I understand, to be signed by about seven-eighths of the legally qualified electors of this city, embracing all classes, sects, and professions; not *all* parties, but the *two* great political parties.

It may, however, not be amiss, for the purpose of bringing more distinctly before you the object for which we are assembled, briefly to recur to the immediate origin of the question upon which you propose to express your opinions.

You will all distinctly remember the events which were transpiring for a considerable time anterior to the last session of Congress, and which necessarily brought up for the consideration and action of that body, various subjects affecting or supposed to affect the different local interests and feelings of the different sections of the country; and all more or less directly involving the delicate and distracting question of slavery. Previous to the session the people had become greatly excited, and the country, from its center to its extremes, convulsed with the subject; the session commenced in a storm, and so entirely did these matters engross the feelings and control the action of members, that days and weeks of the session passed away in fruitless efforts to organize the House; the ordinary business of legislation was suspended; the honest creditors of the Government were denied a hearing, and nearly the whole session of Congress, embracing a period of almost ten months, was spent in angry and acrimonious debate. All remember with what painful excitement the lookers on from a distance waited the result. It would detain you too long, indeed, it is unnecessary to go into a detailed history of the struggle; suffice it to say that it resulted in the adoption of a series of measures called the peace or compromise measures, one of which is that which regards the extradition of fugitive slaves, and that is the one in reference to which, more especially, you have deemed it necessary to express your opinion to-night.

Upon the adjournment of Congress it seemed for a time that if comparative peace and tranquility was restored. Indeed it was then hoped that these questions might be considered as settled, and be no longer suffered to agitate the country. But this did not suit the purpose of certain persons in either extreme; and hence agitation soon began again, and is continued

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to this time; and now there is a spirit of disunion and discord prevailing, a disregard of the laws and constitutional obligations, which, unless met and controlled by a conservative influence, bode evil to the country.

And, gentlemen, it is not to be disguised that this spirit is not confined to the remote sections of the country where we have been accustomed to expect it; but here in this highly favored and happy New England, there are those who avow their purpose not to abide by any compromise; who hold to a *higher law* than the Constitution of their country, in virtue of which those provisions of that sacred instrument which conflict with individual conscience, are abrogated.

There are here among the order-loving, law-abiding people (as we have been accustomed to consider ourselves) of New England, those who teach and those who preach disobedience and forcible resistance to the laws and the constituted authorities, even to the shedding of blood!

Now as much as we may wish it were otherwise, these things are so. I suppose you do not entertain these opinions. I suppose there is no one here pursuant to the call, but would desire not to be suspected of entertaining such opinions, or of having any sympathy with those who do. Therefore it is right and proper, here to assemble and publicly declare our unabated attachment and unwavering fidelity to the Union, and to its Constitution; and our determination to abide by and sustain the Constitution in *all* its parts. That it is our purpose now, and at all times, and under all circumstances, to inculcate and enforce the duty of obedience to the laws, all laws regularly enacted—not excepting those of the compromise; and no less *than one* of the series of compromise measures which relates to fugitives from service, than all the others of the series.

It is unnecessary now to go into the question whether the law to which I have alluded, and out of which has grown so much feeling, be defensible in all its details or not. We are to sustain it; it is our duty as patriots, and as Christians, to sustain it so long as it continues to be the law of the land.

In regard to this law, however, I wish to say a word. I have examined it somewhat critically and carefully, and I declare I cannot find that it is justly amenable to all the abuse which has been so liberally bestowed upon it. I do not believe it is. I do not doubt there is great misapprehension in regard to its provisions. It may be honest misapprehension, but I do not believe it is understood, and I fear there is too little disposition to understand it. It may not be so.

Now, in the first place, I do not doubt that it was the duty of Congress to pass some law on this subject more effectually

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to secure to the South their constitutional rights. No doubt it is the duty of Congress, from time to time, to legislate on this subject, as the exigencies of the times require. This duty was very early recognized, for in 1793, four years after the adoption of the Constitution, Congress passed a law in principle the same as the act in question; and on examination and comparison of the two laws, I think that of 1850, will be fairly subject to less complaint than that of 1793.

The law of 1793, in one or two particulars, was undoubtedly defective, and therefore the necessity of the revision. The law of 1793 devolved upon State magistrates, Justices of the Peace, the duty of its execution; well, experience shewed that this was an unwise provision, and in 1842 the Supreme Court of the United States, in a case before them, intimated a doubt whether State magistrates could be required to act under the law of Congress; I don't understand that it was *decided* that they could not; but the intimation of a doubt was quite sufficient to render that part of the law a dead letter; indeed the whole law from that time ceased to have any vitality, and it became necessary to provide a substitute; hence the act of 1850 provides for the appointment of Commissioners, men legaliy qualified and competent to execute the law. This is a great improvement upon the old law; so in another respect, the law of 1793 did indeed profess to authorize the master or his agent to seize or arrest the alledged fugitive, but it left him without any legal process; he was obliged to rely upon physical force alone, and this sometimes led to disturbance, endangering the security of the freeman; confounding him, as it sometimes did, with the fugitive slave. But the law of 1850 has wisely provided that a warrant may issue in the first instance, directed to the Marshal of the District, or other known officer, who is required to execute the warrant, peaceably, in the execution of his duties *as* such officer. Is not this a great improvement upon the old law? Does it not add greatly to the security of all parties? No doubt. But I am not going into all the details of the act; I am not here for the purpose of justifying them, but I cannot justify the abuse heaped upon the law.

I wish every individual who desires information on this subject, would take the two laws—that of 1793, under which we have lived a half century, and that of 1850—and compare them, and I am confident that the latter will not suffer by comparison.

The chair is informed that the Hon. Ralph I. Ingersoll will present certain resolutions accompanied with such remarks as he may deem desirable.

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The Hon. R. I. Ingersoll then arose, and was greeted with loud and enthusiastic applause. The following resolutions were presented by him:

Resolved, That we cherish a cordial, habitual and immoveable attachment to the Union, and the Constitution which the fathers of this Republic framed for us; that we regard this Union and its Constitution as beacon lights erected by the wisest and purest of patriots, under the guidance of Providence, to save from wreck the ark of our Liberties and Independence.

Resolved, That we regard the unity of government which constitutes the people of the United States one people, "as the main pillar in the edifice of our real independence; the support of our tranquility at home; of our peace abroad; of our safety; of our prosperity, and of the very liberty which we so highly prize;" that it is the duty of every good citizen to "watch for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts."

Resolved, That the Constitution of the United States, in all its parts, and all its compacts, is the supreme law of the land, which every citizen and every State is bound to regard, and to which the electors of Connecticut are sworn to be "true and faithful;" that the requirements contained in it, that "persons held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof escaping into another State, shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due," is of not less binding force than the other parts of that sacred instrument; and that the recent act of Congress regarding fugitives, having been passed pursuant to this plain provision of the Constitution itself, should be truly and faithfully sustained by every friend of that glorious Union under which it has pleased Providence to favor us with unexampled prosperity.

Resolved, That we will abide by and support, all the measures of peace and compromise, as adopted at the last session of Congress; as well as the acts for the settlement of the boundaries of Texas, and for the territorial governments of Utah and New Mexico, as the act for the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia; as well as that which enforces the Constitutional duty of surrendering fugitive slaves, as that which admits the State of California into this Union, with a Constitution excluding the institution of slavery; and in view of the difficulties with which those measures were surrounded, the great length of time which their discussion and examination occupied before Congress, and the country, the dangerous and threatening agitation of the public mind which preceded their enactment, and the patriotic, untiring, and unparalleled exertions of the eminent statesmen of both political parties who labored in season and out of season for an amicable adjustment, we feel it to be our duty to adhere to the result as an amicable settlement, and "in principle and substance a final settlement of the dangerous and exciting subjects" with which the country has been disturbed; and we deprecate the re-opening of the questions connected with them or their further agitation, as unwise, unpatriotic and fraught with imminent peril to the peace, prosperity, and union of our common country.

Resolved, That we know of no higher law as a rule for political action than the Constitution of the United States, and we have no sympathy or fellowship with men who instigate or encourage a forcible resistance to

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the constituted authorities of the country; we hold such men to be mischievous members of the community, and justly deserving the severest penalties which the laws have provided for their offences—and that those who claim to be too conscientious to yield their obedience to the laws of the land, should remove themselves to some other country whose institutions they prefer, and not avail themselves of the benefits of the Union whilst they repudiate its obligations.

Resolved, That we are utterly opposed to all foreign interference with our political and civil institutions; and when foreign agents or emissaries come among us teaching or preaching treason to the Government, they are not entitled to the hospitalities of the country which they abuse, or the respect or countenance of a law abiding people.

Resolved, That the following named citizens be appointed an UNION SAFETY COMMITTEE, with power to fill vacancies and add to their numbers; whose duty shall be, by correspondence and otherwise, to carry out the objects of this meeting—which are hereby declared to be: To revive and foster among the people of the United States—*the spirit in which the Union was formed* and the Constitution was adopted—and to resist "every attempt to alienate any portion of our county from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now bind together the various parts."

Alfred Blackman,	Charles Atwater, Jr.,
Dennis Kinberly,	James M. Veader,
Charles A. Ingersoll,	John Galpin,
Wm. H. Ellis,	George Hoadley,
James Brewster,	James Punderford,
Charles P. Hubbell,	John B. Robertson,
H. B. Welch,	Henry Hooker,
Charles W. Allen,	Lewis B. Judson,
Samuel S. Bassett,	Henry G. Lewis,
Burton Mallory,	Lyman Bissell,
Stephen Gilbert,	Leander Parmelee,
George D. English,	C. S. A. Davis,

William Dickerman.

Loud plaudits accompanied and followed the reading of the resolutions, after which Mr. Ingersoll addressed the audience as follows:

Mr. President and Fellow Citizens:—I should have been well satisfied, had the vote been taken upon the resolutions, without a word of comment—but as my fellow citizens now assembled from this busy community, seem to expect that something should be said, I will detain them for a few moments, and I assure you they shall be very few, while I express my own views on the subject that has brought us here. I shall say nothing but as to one of the measures of compromise, for the public sentiment has been too generally expressed in favor of the others to justify any further comment on them on the present occasion. It is, however, the fugitive act that has drawn upon the compromise the violent denunciations of a portion of the public press—of meetings of excited citizens, and I regret to add, of some pulpits, too. But after all this

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excitement, "feigned or felt," the calm searcher after truth will find that this act is founded in one of the solemn compacts of the Constitution, which plainly declares that "persons held to service or labor in one State under the laws thereof, shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

It has always appeared to me in view of this clause of the Constitution, that the only consistent opponents either of the law of 1793, for the return of fugitive slaves to the jurisdiction from which they come, or the law of the last session of Congress, which is the same in principle, though more effectual in carrying out the constitutional requirements, are those, who like Mr. Garrison and his associates, denounce the Constitution itself, as "a compact with sin," as well as all laws that are made in obedience to its requirements. But I am not one of those who believe that we have grown wiser in reference either to our moral or constitutional duties, than were the fathers of the Republic. They carried the country through the war of the Revolution, the men of the north and the men of the south, contending shoulder to shoulder, in the common cause, without stopping to call in question, or interfere with the domestic institutions, which either section saw fit to maintain. The illustrious statesman who drew up the Declaration of Independence, was himself a southern slaveholder, and the same may be said of him, more illustrious, who lead our armies through the contests of the Revolution, the man "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." The fraternal feeling which it had pleased Providence to bless, in the first struggles of the then rising Republic, animated the members of the convention which afterwards met to finish the great work, which had its beginning in the battle-field. Union, harmony, concession, were the watch-words of those days; without them, the independence of these States could never have been won, without them, this government could never have been established; and in my humble opinion its days will have been numbered when we cease to regard them as they were regarded by those early patriots. There were undoubtedly, sectional interests, and sectional feelings, manifested to some extent in the convention that formed the Constitution. I will mention two of them. The subject of slavery was a delicate one with the south, lest it should be interfered with contrary to their wishes; on the other hand, the navigating interests of the east, created somewhat of a sectional feeling in the other geographical extreme, where the desire was universal to place this great interest of New England under the control of a general government which could secure it against foreign interference or competition.

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The States at the south then had the right to import slaves from Africa or elsewhere to any extent as might seem to them expedient—a right which they could have retained till this day, but for the Constitution which limited it to the year 1808. The committee to whom the subject had been referred, first reported in favor of the year 1800. The south was particularly restive under this proposed restriction, and the delegates from some of the southern States, intimated that they never could come into the Union upon such a condition. A committee at the same time had also reported in favor of restricting Congress from passing any navigation laws, unless by a two-thirds vote of the members—a condition which New England felt to be fatal to her interests. In this state of things both subjects were recommitted to the same committee, and a compromise was the result; they reported to permit the slave trade to go on till the year 1808, and to authorize Congress to pass navigation laws, without the two-thirds restriction. Both recommendations were harmoniously adopted by the convention—and it will be found upon the record, that upon the question of giving the longest time (1808) for the slave trade, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut, (the only New England States then represented) voted in the affirmative, with the extreme south, against the votes of the central States and Virginia. Subsequently, when it was proposed to insert that article in the Constitution which requires the surrender of fugitive slaves, out of which the acts of Congress on that subject have sprung, not a voice from New England was raised against it;—it passed with entire unanimity. And when I mention the venerated names of Roger Sherman, Oliver Ellsworth, and Wm. Samuel Johnson, the men who then represented the honor and interest of Connecticut, I am sure that no voice in this community will utter a reproach upon their memories. It was not that these delegates, or their associates from the other portions of New England, were in favor of slavery in any of its forms. Far from it; most, if not all of them, had taken part in the legislation of the Eastern States, gradually to be rid of it in our own borders. But in the convention they did not forget that they were forming a united government, for seperate and independent sovereignties, having different local interests, habits, and pursuits—a government limited in its operation to matters most external, and which left the internal and domestic concerns of each State, as far as consistently could be, to its own legislation. And though they voted to permit the slave trade to such States as might choose to have it, till the year 1808, yet even that was better than to form no union at all, and thus leave it to go on forever under sovereignties dis-

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united, and independent of each other. So when they agreed that fugitives should be delivered up, it was but a part of the compact by which the importation was limited, and probably secured to the slave population at the south, more liberties and greater indulgencies from those whom they served, than they would have had without it,—for without some such provision, the master would very naturally resort to a more severe and rigid discipline to prevent escapes which would always be attended by a total loss. In this connection I may be permitted here to observe, that although the word "slave," no where appears in the Constitution of the United States, (there was a fastidiousness about using it among the members of the convention)—yet the Connecticut delegation had no objection to call things or persons by the appropriate names, and our own State voted with Virginia and Georgia to substitute the word "slaves" for the word "persons" where it occurs in the article on that subject.

Such was the action of the convention on this disturbing subject. After the adoption of the Constitution, it was brought to the early attention of Congress, and that body in the session of 1792–93, passed a law similar in its principles to the one which has lately been so violently denounced. This act provides (the act of 1793) that the master of any fugitive slave, from another State, may recover him, either by himself, or attorney, without a warrant for the arrest, and take him before any judge or justice of the peace, and upon proof to the satisfaction of the magistrate either oral, or by affidavit, that the person arrested is a fugitive slave, it is made the duty of the magistrate to give a certificate of the fact, which certificate is made to be a sufficient warrant to take the fugitive back to the jurisdiction from which he came. It also imposed a penalty of five hundred dollars on any one who should obstruct the proceedings or conceal the fugitive, knowing the fact. It will be difficult to find anything in the late act more summary or stringent than this—and if there was any foundation for the objections of which we have lately heard—so in regard to the trial by jury and the writs of habeas corpus, they would apply in all their force to this act, which has again and again received the sanction of the highest judicial authorities of the land. Indeed, I may say that all the legislation of Congress on this subject, whether of 1793 or 1850, is borrowed from New England. The first provision that I find for the surrender of fugitives is among the articles of confederation entered into on the 7th September, 1643, between the colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven. It is the 8th article, and reads thus:—

"It is also agreed, that if any servant run away from his

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master, into any other of these confederated jurisdictions, that in such case upon the certificate of one magistrate in the jurisdiction out of which the said servant fled, or upon other proof, the said servant shall be delivered, either to his master or any other that pursues, and brings such certificate or proof."

The similarity is so striking that I think we cannot mistake the origin of the different enactments. Connected with this same article in the New England Confederation, is another equally summary for the delivery of fugitives from justice, much as the two subjects are connected in the constitutional article, and in the act of 1793; and still more strikingly marking their origin. Any one who is curious on this subject may find the New England articles in Hinman's Historical Collections, pages 34 and 35—a book that may be found in the public libraries of this city, and in private libraries. The Historical Collections of Massachusetts will also show that other distant colonies, not confederated with us, as far south as Virginia, applied through their governors to the authorities of New England for the arrest of fugitives from their jurisdictions, which were returned to them as a matter of courtesy and colonial common law, even without any articles requiring it. When the act of 1793 therefore came before Congress, it is not at all surprising that it met with no serious opposition from this section of the country. It was introduced in the Senate of the United States, and is said to have been penned by Mr. Cabot, a distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, though I have not the Journal of the Senate that will enable me to speak from the record. It passed the body, however, by a unanimous vote. In the House of Representatives, the Journal shows that it passed by the decisive vote of 48 yeas to 7 nays—the majority being composed of 26 members from northern and central States, and 22 from States holding slaves. The minority was composed of 5 members from the North and 2 from the South. The northern and central States had a majority in the House. I find of the Connecticut delegation the names of James Hillhouse, Jeremiah Wadsworth and Amasa Learned, recorded as voting for the bill—and but one of our members, Jonathan Sturges, voting against it. This act will be found in the old edition of United States laws, bearing upon it the name of Jonathan Trumbull, who was then the Speaker of the House, and a member from Connecticut, an honored name in our history—and bearing also the approving name of one more honored—GEORGE WASHINGTON. I find also among the list of those voting for it, Elbridge Gerry, Fisher Ames, and Theodore Sedgwick, men who it is to be presumed understood their

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duties at least as well as those who make greater pretensions now. I find also there, the name of Elias Boudinot, the father and first President of the American Bible Society, a stainless name in a generation of christian statesmen who did honor to the age in which they lived. This law, which they passed, has been as free from abuse in practice as any other that could be passed on the subject. When the Constitution was adopted, and when this act was passed in 1793, slavery was not confined to the South, it was diffused over the Northern country also—scarcely, but still among us. It existed in Connecticut —and although there are many in this meeting older than myself, yet I have seen, here in New Haven, a slave sold on an execution, at the post, for debt. Many of our substantial farmers owned families of slaves—and remnants of the race may now be found in some of our country towns hovering around the fire-side of the families to which their fathers belonged—holding to the very hearth-stones as it were, with family affection. If in the days to which I have alluded, a slave had escaped from this State to a neighboring State, I have no reason to doubt that the master willingly availed himself of the act of 1793, and his constitutional rights, for the recovery of the fugitive. What would then have been the feelings of men in Connecticut, had persons been found here base enough to tell these slaves to cut their master's throats—to resist to the death—that juries would probably disregard the obligations of their oaths if they were brought to trial—and at any rate a crown of martydom awaited them if they should die by the gallows? Does any one believe that our sturdy ancestors would have brooked such interference more complacently than our southern brethren now do? Immediate emancipation, now so loudly demanded in certain quarters, was not the policy which Connecticut adopted even in reference to the few slaves we had among us. We never passed a law to emancipate one who was born a slave—I say never—for the act of the General Assembly, two years ago, declaring that slavery should no longer exist here—was a mere flourish of philanthropy, after slavery had practically ceased, the cheapest way imaginable of making known our hostility to the system. We did indeed, many years ago, pass laws that the children of slaves, born after a certain time, should upon their arrival at a certain age, become free; and by this very gradual process the institution was almost imperceptibly undermined. We worked our way through the difficulty in our own good time; a work which, I believe would have been very much retarded, if not prevented, had foreign emissaries been permitted to come among us teaching and preaching, as they have since done, the modern doctrines of

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immediate emancipation. If our fathers with so few slaves among them, found the subject so delicate to be dealt with, should we not draw from it a lesson of the most careful forbearance, and a faithful performance of our constitutional duties towards those States which have now hundreds and thousands of this population to be dealt with, where we had but one?

The many petitions got up often by artful managers, and pressed upon Congress, for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, for the last few years, in the hope of affecting slavery in the States adjoining indirectly, have no doubt done much to bring the present crisis upon the country. Here, too, we have wisdom to learn from the past, for the subject of slavery in the District of Columbia, is one which any administration may be embarrassed with at all times, if the opposition is unscrupulous enough to ring the changes incessantly upon it. This subject was brought before Congress as early as 1805, not in a proposition for immediate abolition —the panacea of modern philanthropists—but merely that the children born of slave parents, belonging to citizens of the District of Columbia, should become free on their arrival at a certain age. The administration was then in southern hands—it was during the presidency of Mr. Jefferson, who, as we all know, had in the House of Representatives a very talented and skillful opposition. The leader of that opposition was from the State of Connecticut. I allude, of course, to the late Roger Griswold, a man of commanding intellect and spotless honor. However tempting the occasion might have been to a man of less honorable bearing, to turn the anti-slavery feeling against the administration, yet he bore himself far above any such paltry policy; and when the question was taken, he with those of his colleagues from Connecticut, who were present on the occasion, voted to a man promptly against the proposition. The vote of our delegation was never censured by the freemen of Connecticut, and the whole subject was put at rest for the quarter of a century that followed. Subsequent agitation has brought us where we are. The act of 1793, formed in good faith, and for many years executed in good faith, had, by reason of constant agitation on the subject of slavery, become inoperative. It depended for its execution principally on State magistrates, over whom the general government had no control, and who could not be required to carry the law into effect, though the act gave them the power, if they chose to exercise it. State legislation also came in to nullify their proceedings, and make the law practically a dead letter upon the statute book. This defect has been remedied by the new law, which provides for the appointment of United States Commissioners, who are to

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execute it instead of State magistrates, and the penalties for obstructing the proceedings are increased from five hundred to a thousand dollars, and imprisonment not exceeding six months. It is in principle substantially the same as that of 1793.

The only question now is, my fellow-citizens, whether we will abide by and support this act with those others, which are rightly named measures of peace and compromise, as a fair, and honorable, and amicable adjustment of this distracting subject? If there was ever a time when men should step out of the ranks of party, and stand by the institutions of the country, now is the day and now is the hour. When we see the most eminent men, of both political parties, in our national councils, such men as Cass and Webster, Clay and Dickinson, Houston, and Bell, Foote, Douglass and Pearce, and others hardly less distinguished, forgetting party in one untied effort for our glorious Union, is it not time that the masses should respond to the movement throughout the length and breadth of our country? The President of the United States has on this subject, faithfully and fearlessly done his duty. Notwithstanding the division in public sentiment in the Empire State, from which he comes, he has not hesitated in the midst of the raging elements, to unfurl the flag of the Union, to breast the storm, and fling his banner to the breeze. His message at the opening of the present session, in reference to this agitating subject, does honor to his head and heart.

I say this the more willingly, because, as my fellow-citizens all know, I do not belong to the political party which assisted to place the President in the position which has led to his present advancement; and from his administration, I of course expect nothing personal to myself—I wish for nothing —I hope for nothing. But I should dispise myself, if I should permit my political preferences to deter me from doing justice to the man, of any political party, who dare be honest in the worst of times. Yes, fellow-citizens, and I should do injustice to the veteran soldier and civilian, who upheld the standard of my party in the late Presidential contest, and who in the heat of it, declared—"If we are not struck with judicial blindness, we shall cling to this Constitution, as the mariner clings to the last plank, when night and the tempest close around him." A statesman, who, notwithstanding his defeat, has dared to go with him who dare go farthest, in defence of that Union which the patriots of another age have committed to our keeping.

Let us then resolve, so far as it may depend on us, that "THIS UNION SHALL BE PRESERVED." Political martrydom would be preferable than to see this Republic dismembered, and its glories gone. Yes, better to die a thousand deaths, than

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that the land of Washington, of Jefferson, and of Marshall—the land of the Pickneys and the Rutleges—the land of Jackson and of Taylor, should become foreign land to us. In the language of one who has given himself to this cause with a self-sacrificing devotion, worthy of the best days of the Republic, I will say—"better would it be to die, while the honor of the country is untarnished, and the flag of the Union still flying over our heads, than live to behold that honor gone forever, and that flag prostrate in the dust." (Mr. I. was loudly cheered throughout.)

The President now called upon E. K. Foster, Esq. to which Judge Foster replied as follows:

Mr. President and Fellow Citizens: I rise to respond to the call thus made upon me, not with a view of making a speech. I have neither the ability nor the inclination to do so, and with so many before and around me, much better able than I am to interest you, it would be presumption in me to attempt it. But I do desire to express my approbation of the objects of this meeting, and my unqualified approbation of the resolutions on the table. I believe that these resolutions involve principles upon which depend our union, happiness and freedom. I should be basely recreant to the truth, if I hesitated to answer any call to express my sentiments on these subjects. In my opinion, the time has arrived which makes a meeting of this kind necessary. I am sorry to say it, I would it were not so. I believe it is so. Murmurings and discontent are heard not only in the South but in the land of Roger Sherman, in the land of John Hancock, and even Vermont, the "north star," seems to flicker on the subject of adhering to and maintaining the Constitution and the laws! In these times, when men come forward and talk what seems to me treason, it is our duty to meet and repel them. But it is asked, what do we hope to gain? What objects do we propose to accomplish by this Union meeting? We wish to bring out public sentiment on this matter. We wish to show that it is sound; and to every voice that cries disunion, we wish to reply from ten thousand voices, No! Union now, and Union Forever! (*Loud applause.*) If the public mind must be made familiar with the doctrine of resistance to law, it is that it may be regarded as a kind of moral treason.

The cry of infidelity to the Union, secession from the Union, resistance to laws enacted by Congress, until within a short time, was heard only from one small portion of the community. In 1832, South Carolina, putting herself in an attitude of hostility to the Union, there was but one feeling

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throughout the length and breadth of the land—all believed her recreant to the Constitution, recreant to the Union, and false to herself. Now, after the lapse of eighteen years, there are those among us, who not only mutter and murmur disunion sentiments, and resistance to law, but say it aloud. It is not limited to any profession—it is found to some extent in all. Some of those even whose duty it is to preach the gospel of peace, and the precepts of our divine Savior, instruct the fugitive to plunge the knife into the heart of the officer who endeavors to arrest him, and carry out the law! It is time to see whether this is right.

Now, sir, it is not my purpose to go into an examination of the particular series of acts, known as the Compromise Measures. They have been amply defended. They were passed after mature deliberation, after a struggle unprecedented, and should be regarded in my judgment as the President of the United States, and the resolutions on your table regard them. But there is a question back of these and reaching far above them—and that is the question of fidelity to the Constitution, and submission to law. I care not how obnoxious a law may be—I care not if it is so obnoxious that not one citizen in the State, will give his vote for it. Yet if it is passed by those delegated to carry out the powers of the Constitution in the fair exercise of their powers, then we are bound to obey it at all hazards. If it is not so, what becomes of our government? What safety is there except in the obedience to law? If *we* can nulify and set aside laws, because they are opposed to our wishes, what prevents others from doing the same thing? And what becomes of our government? There is no principle of cohesion left—what then becomes of the government? Anarchy must necessarily prevail. We have no standing army, and nothing to fall back upon, but those principles which are the foundation of law, and government. Allow me to say it is easier—O how much easier!—to destroy, than to create—to pull down than to build up. We may sit here and calculate the probabilities of the Union, but let one State secede and it is a Union no longer. I will not say that it might not be coerced into submission by the general government, but a union that depends upon force is no union. No union can hold the American States together, but a union of blood, a union of affection and kindly feeling—no other can exist.

I do not propose to detain you with a speech, but one resolution strikes me with peculiar force—that which declares that the subject of slavery, whatever may be our views on particular matters, should be consigned to rest. The country needs and should have repose. And I believe that those who are too conscientious to submit to law here, had better

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remove to some other country better fitted to their inclinations. (*Deafening appaulse.*) What is it that men who agitate this subject aim at? What would they have? What purpose would they accomplish? Ask them—is it the emancipation of the slave? No. What then is it? Do you desire to interfere with the compact of the Constitution, and thus render it valueless? No. What then is it you would do? Is it to benefit thirty millions of white people? They will hardly claim it. What, then, in the name of common sense, is it that leads you to distract the country and interfere with its prosperity? If we have those among us who will do this, and be unfaithful to the compacts and compromises of the Constitution, because some law does not harmonize with their taste and unapproachable wisdom, I appeal to you, whether this is the country for them? On this matter I desire no concealment. I would interfere with the rights of no man. I would allow every man liberty to express his sentiments, and leave his actions uncontrolled, holding him responsible for both. When he shows a recklessness of all obligations of a high and binding character, I say this is not the place for him; let him go to Canada. (*Cheers.*) We have nothing to do with slavery. We have no more to do with slavery in the States south of the Potomoc than we have with slavery in Africa or Spain, or in any other portion of the globe. Will any man pretend that the government under which we live as not worthy of our cordial support, admiration and love? Are we not literally covered with blessings resulting from the free government our ancestors gave us? Is there a nation on earth whose government can compare with it? Is not the happiness of countless myriads centered in this government? Suppose that by continued agitation three millions of slaves might, through the slaughter of their masters and of the wives and children of their masters, be brought into a state of freedom over the ruins of the union. Is no consideration to be given to thirty millions of whites? I have sympathy for every man, black or white! but I say I have as much sympathy for a white man as for a negro; (*laughter*) and if the question be between three millions of negroes and thirty millions of whites, then I have ten times more. Upon any principal, and in any way in which this subject can be regarded and looked at, there is a madness about the disunion agitation that surpasses all comprehension. No, fellow-citizens, if we would live an united and happy people, we must maintain the law, whether it is pleasing to us or not. If there is a man here who would have one star struck from our glorious flag, or one stripe erased from our banner, I have only to say he ought not to be here—in the language of the

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resolutions, he should take himself elsewhere. [*A voice—send him to Russia.*] I agree; let him be anywhere under the heavens but here. He can accomplish no good here; whether he would elsewhere is a question in which this meeting is not much concerned. Whatever it may cost, when the Union is endangered I will be found among those who rally for its preservation. However it may be with other gentlemen, whether they desire to go to Russia or elsewhere, as for me and my house, we will be found in the path of duty. (*Cheers.*) It is a matter of proud satisfaction to have such an audience endorse the sentiments of such an unworthy speaker. Here there are no distinction of professions or parties; all have united, and to me it is the happiest sight of the kind I have ever witnessed. It is a scene of surpassing moral beauty; and the agitation of this subject in Congress has brought to view a scene worthy our highest admiration, and which may be well said to reach the moral sublime. Look at it. After a struggle of unprecedented fierceness, we have seen the old political war-horses, the veterans of either party, who have not laid aside their armor for forty years, grasping hands over the altar of their common country, and pledging themselves to a united defence of her Constitution and laws. (*Cheers.*)

Can we do anything more? Shall we do any thing less? I leave it for you to make the response. I know that in Connecticut the people will be found right. I know—I feel that I know, that if any man rushing without reflection into this matter will but pause and see the consequences which will result from his conduct and doctrines, he will at once stop his thoughtless course. I can't trust myself to believe that there is one man who would apply the torch to the temple of our liberty—certain, I am, he lives not in Connecticut. (*Cheers*)

The chairman now called upon CHARLES A. INGERSOLL, Esq., who came forward, and after the applause which greeted him had subsided, said:

I should have preferred it if some other gentleman had been called upon at this time to address this assembly. I never think it is very acceptable to a meeting of this kind to hear too much from those having the same name; (*laughter*) and therefore, as you have heard something from one having the name which I bear, it would be much more agreeable if some other gentleman had been called upon; but as I have been, I will make a few suggestions and they shall be only a few. And I will say in the outset that I look upon the assembly here gathered together as one of no ordinary account—as one that has met together—not for the passing upon a question which is of a few days consequence; not for the

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purpose of deciding the question whether this man or that man shall receive votes for an unimportant office, each of whom are equally as well qualified as the other, and neither of whom may be qualified at all. But this question not only concerns us and those who shall come after us, but those in other States and other lands; for if the sentiments which are engrafted in the resolutions which have been read are not sustained and faithfully carried out, we may bid adieu to the blessings which surrounded us and the happy situation in which we have been placed. Sir, I look to the example which this country is to afford to other nations; I have looked with proud anticipation to the time when the principles of government and the examples which we set will be adopted in other States and in other nations. But if the principles which are contained in these resolutions are not faithfully carried out as they should be, we may bid adieu to such sentiments hereafter. We have met here to pass our opinion on certain questions which were had up before Congress, and which at the termination of the last session we all supposed had been finally settled. Allusion has been made in the manner in which Congress assembled; if ever a Congress assembled which foreboded evil to the country it was that. Allusion has been made to the time consumed in the organization of the House; when we look at the manner in which it was organized and of the efforts made to organize, we find that acrimonious feelings existed among its members. Members from the North were there who would not sustain the nominations of their party, because, forsooth, the nominees came from slave holding States. There were found members from the South who refused to sustain nominations of their party because the nominees came from the free States. If this was carried out what would soon be the condition of things? Where would we be? But, Sir, Congress was finally organized, and after being organized, the great men of the nation of both political parties, set themselves to work for the purpose of rescuing the country from the dilemna in which it had been placed, and placing it where it was before, when every thing was prosperous. Through their efforts, measures, called peace measures were proposed and finally acquiessed in by a majority of both branches, and received the signature of the President.

And, Sir, I am one of those who are not only willing to acquiese in them one and all, but I stand here and say they are right—and, sir, if I had been honored with a seat in the Congress of the United States, with my present feelings I should have voted for every one of them, and done my country some service by the vote which I should have given. I cast no reproach upon those who did not. I say what I should have done.

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What are these measures? First, there is the admission of California as a State free from slavery. Second, the establishment of territorial governments for Utah and New Mexico, with a power reserved by the people under those governments to establish or reject slavery as they please; and although this power is given to them, and no Wilmot Proviso is engrafted upon the law which admits them, it may be said that the Almighty has provided a proviso more calculated to accomplish the object than that any Wilmot could have made. (*Cheers.*) Third, the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia. The last in the list is the famous Fugitive Slave law. When I have looked at this subject and examined the law and the Constitution, I have been struck with surprise to see the excitement had on the subject in days past, some little of which remains now; because, if in my judgment there was any duty imposed on Congress it was to pass the Fugitive Slave Law, or one like it. For how is this happy country held together? To what can we attribute the inimitable blessings which flow day after day? It is to the Constitution of the United States—that Constitution which was formed by men of as pure minds as ever lived in any country. The Constitution is a system of compromises. What does it declare? It declares that any person held to service in one State, escaping into another *shall* be delivered up to the person to whom such services are due. What duty does the Constitution impose upon the Congress of the States? It imposes the duty on Congress of passing a law to carry this provision into effect. When any member of Congress takes his official oath he swears by the ever-living God that he will pass such laws as will effectually carry out the provisions of the Constitution in this respect. What did the members of the first Congress do? They passed the act of 1793, and endeavored to carry out the provisions of the Constitution in this respect. The great and good men of that day endeavored, and supposed they had effectually carried out that provision. They regarded that mandate in the Constitution, and they adopted and passed with the unanimity which has been stated, the act of 1793. The act, similar to the one which is now said to be unconstitutional; and which it is now also said "no man but those leagued with the powers of hell will ever approve!" Who were those men? Mention has been made of some. The names of those from this State have been cited—those belonged to the lower House of Congress of the United States, have been named. So far as I can recollect, the Senators from this State were not mentioned. They were Oliver Ellsworth, whose signature to the Constitution, and our own Roger Sherman. These were the men who according to certain so called philanthropists were leagued with the pow-

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ers of hell to carry out the provisions of the Constitution. This law was found ineffectual and therefore the act of 1850 was passed. Why was it ineffectual? Who caused it to be ineffectual? Was it the Constitution that made it ineffectual? It was the small politicians of both parties who made it ineffectual.

Look at our State—you need not look any farther. Oliver Ellsworth and Roger Sherman were seen with Jonathan Trumbull, James Hillhouse and others in the House of Representatives, giving their aid and approbation to the law, which made it the duty not only of the Judges of the Courts of the United States, but the Judges of the State Courts and magistrates to carry out the law, and which provided that the owner of the fugitive might go before the Judge of a State Court, or the magistrate of a town, and receive a certificate by which he would be enabled to carry his fugitive back from whence he came. And what did Connecticut do? In 1838 by an act entitled an act more effectually to carry out the provisions of the Constitution of the United States, the Legislature of Connecticut prohibited all magistrates in the State from exercising that power! And not only that, but imposed a penalty of $500 upon any magistrate who should presume to exercise that power. Also a penalty of $500 for any officer who should attempt to exercise such power other than Judges, by which the law was rendered in a measure ineffectual. But in 1844 in order more fully to carry out the obligations of the State in regard to the Constitution of the United States, according to the notions of certain pretended philanthropists, a law was passed which is now on the Statute book, but which I hope will be suffered to remain there no longer than the next session of the Legislature, which provides that no Judge of a State Court, no magistrate, and no officer under the State shall exercise the powers conferred by the law of 1793, and that any certificate issued by them shall be void! Here was nullification with a vengeance! We have heard of nullification out of the State, but I have never seen nullification surpassing this. After this any one can see the powers vested by the law of 1793, having been taken away by the State, and the parties attempting to exercise them being subjected to a penalty, were not effective. Therefore the act of 1850 was passed. I think I have shown that the Constitution has provided that there shall be such a law, and it therefore becomes the duty of everyone to see that this provision is carried out. All of us have taken upon ourselves the obligations of an oath to be true and faithful to the Constitution of the United States, and it is our duty therefore to see that the law is carried out in its spirit and in its letter. Yes, every individual who de-

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posites a ballot is first sworn to be to the Constitution true and faithful. And yet we find men after having taken that oath, tell you there is a higher power! But not only so, some from whom he should expect better things, teachers from the pulpit, advise the people to resist the law, whatever may be the consequences! I must say, though I *reverence* my "spiritual pastors and masters" as much as any man—if they construe the spiritual Constitution, the Constitution of the Almighty, as they construe that of their country to which they are sworn to be true and faithful, the only safety for their hearers would not be in following their advice, but in taking directly the contrary course. (*Loud Cheers.*)

Sir, we have been passing through peril. I don't think it is over. I think there is danger still. I think, sir, that if this law is not faithfully carried out, this glorious Union will not continue together. But, sir, I believe this law will be carried out. I think I may say I know it will be carried out in the community in which we live, because we are a law-abiding people—a people who take upon themselves to be to the Constitution true and faithful—who mean exactly what they say; and although when we look back and see what we have passed through, the soul is sickened by the scenes of peril you have all witnessed. Yet it rejoices the heart to see the great and good men of the Nation coming together, and forgetting party ties, party affinities, uniting as one man, and standing upon the platform of the Union for their country's good. (*Cheers.*) The example is worth looking at—the example of these great men I hope will not soon be forgotten. When we look at such men—at Webster, Dickenson, Clay, Cass, and others, their associates, forgetting party ties, and uniting for the good of the country and for the good of the Union, sir, we may know that the Union will be safe. (*Cheers.*)

And, sir, among these men, I may be permitted to say, if ever a debt of gratitude was due to two above the rest—all deserving well—it is due to Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, and Daniel S. Dickenson of New York. (*Applause.*) Others lived in a different community from what these men did. Clay lived where the sentiments of the people were with him; Cass the same; but in Massachusetts, the hot bed of abolition, Webster knew what he had to meet with. He saw the clouds gathering, the storm threatening, and he knew there would be danger to himself personally, if he pursued the path of duty. But forgetting personal considerations, he breasted himself to the storm, and with his eye fixed solely on the Constitution which he had so often ably and eloquently expounded, he nobly offered himself a sacrifice upon the altar of patriotism, for the safety of his country. (*Enthusiastic and long*

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continued cheering.) So with Mr. Dickenson of New York. He came from a community different from the communities to which some of the great men to whom I have alluded belonged. He saw what the feeling was in his own State, but disregarding this, he followed the noble promptings of his patriotic heart, and exerted all his influence for the cause of his country; and I may say—I will say—and I say it with sincerity, though the meed of praise is due to all who voted with them, yet the highest honors should be awarded to the two distinguished Senators whom I have named. (*Cheers.*) The sentiment of New England was not then so united on this subject as we find it now to be. The example set by these two men it would be well for us to intimate. They were ready to forget their parties, to forget their personal friends, to forget every thing but their country and their country's good. The views of Mr. Webster, we have under his own signature in his reply to the committee who invited him to be present at the Union meeting recently held in Castle Garden in New York. Their last resolution was as follows:—

"*Resolved*, That we regard our obligation to the Constitution and the Union as superior to the ties of any of the political parties to which we may hitherto have belonged, and that on all future occasions we will range ourselves under the banner of that party whose principles and practice are most calculated to uphold the Constitution, and to perpetuate our glorious Union."

And, sir, what was his response to this resolution? I will give it to you. He said, "Gentlemen, I am led to the adoption of your last resolution, in an especial and emphatic manner, by every dictate of my understanding, and I embrace it with a full purpose of heart and mind. Its sentiment is my sentiment. With you I declare that I "range myself under the banner of that party whose principles and practice are most calculated to uphold the Constitution, and to perpetuate our glorious Union."

[The reading of this was followed by loud demonstrations of approbation. Mr. I. continued.]

Here is a glorious example for us to follow. How was it with Mr. Clay of Kentucky? When invited by the Legislature of his own State to address them on the topics of the day, on the subjects which had recently been before Congress, he told him that among his political foes he had found great patriots and friends; that they had stood on the same platform with himself, and that if his own party ever degenerated into an Abolition party, he would go with the Democracy.—(*Cheers.*) How was it with Mr. Cass, whom many of us at the last Presidential election supported—whom many of us delighted to support? When the subject of the Comprom-

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ise was agitated, and when it was proposed to appoint a committee of thirteen, he was told by some small politicians, that if this committee of thirteen was appointed, Mr. Clay would be at its head, and that it would insure his election at the next Presidential contest. What was his reply. "Sir," said he, "I go for my country; if Mr. Clay's election is to save my country, then I go for him!" (*Great applause.*) These are sentiments worthy of patriots; they would be honorable to the best Romans in Rome's best days. They are, also, I have no doubt, the sentiments of this assembly. I go for the resolutions that have been adopted, and for the Compromise measures, heart and hand. I am for them not only under present circumstances, but under all circumstances. I believe the country is to be saved by strictly carrying out these measures. I believe they are right. Whether there is fair or foul weather—whether the political skies are dark or bright, I go for the Compromise measures heart and soul.

[Mr. I. took his seat amid *loud and long continued applause.*]

Jonathan Stoddard, Esq., being called upon by the President and the meeting, said he would not detain them but a few moments, for he heard the name of another gentleman called whose eloquence he wished to listen to more than he wished to hear the sound of his own voice. But, sir, said he, at a time on an occasion like this, it seems to me, no man should shrink from expressing his sentiments. I have often cried out against these fanatical abolition excitements and heresies, and often prophesied that their results would be disastrous; but I have been heeded as little as Cassandra was heeded through the streets of Troy—so I concluded to hold my peace. I believe the present danger requires all our moderation, wisdom and sense of justice to dispel. What have we seen for the few years past? We have seen politicians lending themselves to a party of fanatics and disorganizers, in total disregard of the laws and Constitution, which years before, when they took the freeman's oath, they swore to support.

We have seen small politicians insulting and abusing the laws and the Constitution, and selling themselves to a base third party. Both parties are equally culpable, having paltered basely to a third political party. I wish to say that once in my life, and once only, have I been drawn into any thing of this kind, and I wish to record my repentance here. (*Laughter and cheers.*) I wish here to record my vow, that if ever again I am seduced by judicial blindness into an act so base, that my memory may cease so be, and my being be blotted out! (*Deafening applause.*) I say, sir, the history of the past should

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learnus. Let us look at it for a moment. Mr. S. here went back a hundred years, and showed how in a very short time the people of this country were changed from most loyal and devoted subjects of the British crown to open enemies, waring against it at the expense of property and life. Then tracing the progress of abolitionism for the last twenty-five years, he showed how rapidly the feelings of love and veneration for the Union, were changing to those of bitter hostility. If the tide is not swelled back and these abolition fires extinguished, a dissolution of the Union, he remarked, is inevitable. Upon the occurrence of such an event, what a miserable nation we should be? On the borders of each State we should have Custom House officers.

How should we support our armies? We should be surrounded by foreigners; any foreign nation could crush us. How should we support a navy? How protect our commerce abroad? What foreign nation would respect us? Broken into fragments, instead of being envied and formidable, the most petty German and Italian States would scoff at us, and we should be mocked by every tyrant. (*Applause.*) For twenty-five years artful politicians have been here—artful dogers have been here at the north, agitating this question. Have they ever told the people how the Constitution was formed.

Mr. S. here gave a historical sketch of the manner in which the old articles of confederation worked, the evils experienced under them and of the formation of our present U. S. Constitution. The necessity of adhering to the Constitution in all its parts, and of faithfully abiding by its Compromises was eloquently enforced. Blot, said he, one star from our banner and you cannot restore it—it is blotted out forever!

> "In nature's chain, whatever link you strike,
> Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike."

Our Constitution has given us vast advantages. We have prospered until we have rivalled in wealth and commerce the oldest nations, and wherever our flag floats, the names of Washington and Franklin are honored by all. Our Constitution provides no means by which we can hold a conquered province; can we hold it except by affection and love? Dare the South interfere with our institutions? with our apprenticeship system? They have never attempted it. Why should we interfere with their local laws and institutions?

We have made some under-ground railroads, and have permitted it to be done—it is our duty to prevent their establishment. The negro in Africa is a slave, and when brought here you see what he becomes by reference to the negroes of the Amistad. You bring him in contact with christianity

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here, and he frequents brothels at the head of Long Wharf, or the old Liberian. (*Laughter.*)

The North has sent to the South its incendiary publications. Our Southern brethren have been called cut-throats, and the worst of robbers. Is this the way to promote concord? Had you a partner in business, would you allow him to insult you and your servants with handbills and newspapers and speeches. How long would that partnership exist? Yet we have gone farther. Look at the law of Vermont—look at New York and also at Pennsylvania, and tell me if the south has not reason to complain. They without cause and without motive are quarreling with those who are not only our best customers at home, but who give us power and glory abroad.

Go among the Jews, and the Bible will tell you of a time when one tribe bolted because the others refused to give up certain fugitives, and became degraded. Go a little farther, to the time when Titus battered down the walls of Jerusalem. Look at the provinces of Greece, Italy and Germany, domineered over by every tyrant, and by every superior power. (*Cheers.*) If such is their state, what may we expect. We must not only resolve, but act—resolutions alone are not sufficient. They who have sold themselves for a few votes, should receive no countenance, and when this is due we have not only scotched the snake, but killed him. (*Applause.*)

The Rev. Dr. Taylor, Professor of Didactic Theology in Yale College was loudly called for, and came forward to address the meeting. He was warmly received, and a death-like stillness prevailed, while he delivered the following speech in his peculiarly solemn and impressive manner:

Mr. President and Fellow Citizens: I should be extremely happy to say something on this interesting subject, that shall subserve, though in a trifling degree, the interests of my country. I am happy to be here. I am glad to listen to what I have heard. I am especially glad to witness this indifference to party ties, when the great interests of the nation, as these depend upon the spirit of the Constitution and laws of the country, are in issue. Long enough has this subject been trifled with. Long enough have the enemies of law and order had this subject all on their own side, and reasoned it all the wrong way. I am therefore most ready to express my hearty approbation of the resolutions on your table, and as heartily, my unqualified disapprobation of all those attempts to degrade that article in our Constitution, upon which so much has been said, and to trample on the law, which all northern men are bound in good faith to stand by and support to the very last.

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(*Cheers.*) I say *in good faith*; and I ask if the compact made between the Northern and Southern States—independent sovereignties as they are—was not a lawful compact? Had not the North interests at stake sufficient to justify them? I will not go into the question, whether slavery is a sin. Be it so, if you please. Had they not reason, and good reason, for entering into this compact? I will make a supposition: suppose Russia with her hordes, combined with Germany, Austria, Prussia, France and England, were threatening to conquer and devastate our country; suppose for our own protection and safety, we deem it necessary to enter into an alliance with Spain. Now there are slaves in Cuba, and if this alliance is made for our protection, Spain says, that some of her slaves will get among our people, and our people will not deliver them up. War is coming, desolation is coming; it is a sin, if you please, for Spain to have slaves. But may we not lawfully, and for our own safety, enter into such a compact, and agree to deliver up these slaves? We have not made the slavery; Spain is an independent State; and slavery there is made by her own local laws—made in the exercise of her own sovereignty. They are laws, therefore, which, so far as we are concerned, she has a right to make, and for which, we have not the slightest responsibility. Whether she has this right so far as her responsibility to the Judge of all the earth is concerned, is another question. But so far as we are concerned, she has a right to make these laws. And now, if she makes laws, which are wrong, can we make no lawful treaty,—no compact, with her, which will bind the parties? What? may I not buy a piece of meat of a butcher, because he is profane? May I not make contracts with men whose characters, in some respect, are marred by immorality? May I not consult my own safety by numerous acts of a defensive and confederate character, because the men, who are engaged with me, are not as good as I wish they were? Is this the principle in neighborhoods? Will it do in the family? Will it do better among nations? What right have we to make, or unmake laws for the Southern States; or to say, that if the laws, which they make for themselves, and have, so far as we are concerned, a right to make, do not meet our approbation, we will not stand by a lawful compact, which we have made with them? Will the Northern States incur the guilt and the infamy of violating such a compact for such a reason? I am the friend of slaves; I am sorry for slaves; I wish them well with all my heart and soul; and as I wish them well, I say—cease these agitations. Who at the North are the friends of the slaves? The agitators of this subject do more to injure the slaves and per-

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petuate their chains at the South, than their true friends can do to terminate the evil of slavery for half a century. (*Cheers.*)

I have another question to ask:—What right to protection, do fugitive slaves acquire at the North? Every right implies a reciprocal obligation. The right of the creditor implies the obligation of the debtor. But under what obligation are we at the North, to protect fugitives from slavery at the South? We are already bound by a lawful compact to deliver them up. What right have they to ask us to violate this compact? What right have they to come here, and claim our protection, when by affording it, we violate a lawful compact, and endanger the existence of such a nation as this? Am I bound to receive into my family, and to protect and support every man or woman whose condition would thereby be improved, be the consequences to the well-being of my family what they may? Who does not know that Northern protection to the few slaves who escape, directly tends to prolong and augment the bondage of those that remain? Fidelity to our compacts, and the execution of law in the fulfilment of such compacts, mutual confidence and the love of a common country,—not disunion, and turmoil, and civil war—are indispensable to the slightest hope of the termination of slavery. What right then have fugitive slaves to the protection of the North, which imposes on us an obligation to violate our plighted faith, to do what we can to prolong and aggravate southern bondage, and to plunge a nation into ruin?

Sir, there is one great truth, which all are slow to learn; that every earthly condition is a choice of evils; and hence, the lesson of submission, till at least a change for the better instead of for the worse, can be made. Why should not the slaves at the South submit to the condition, which Providence has assigned them? Their condition is a thousand fold better than it would have been, in the pagan midnight and savageism of their native land. Why should they not be grateful for its blessings, and submissive to its evils, till by some practicable change, it can be made better instead of immeasurably worse? We may, we do, most sincerely commiserate their condition as compared with a better. We wish and pray, that it may be made ten thousand times better. Mr. President, I have a heart, and hands also; and show me a right, and lawful, and practicable way, of terminating slavery or alleviating its evils, and with all this heart, and with both these hands, I am ready for the work. But, sir, are mere *feelings*, without judgment, even the feelings of compassion and of sympathy for human suffering, lovely as they are, to sway us, in despite of reason and conscience, and to lead us not

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only to augment the very evil we deprecate, but to drench our beloved country with fraternal blood? Is this the sober dictate of the New England conscience, or is it the prompting of mad fanaticism?

As to the higher-law principle:—You expect me to admit, of course, that we are all the subjects of Him who reigns amid the grandeurs and glory of eternity, and that when his will is known, that we as moral beings are bound to submit. There is no question on that point; here is the point—is that article in our Constitution contrary to the will of God—contrary to the law of nature, of nations and the will of God? Is it so? Is there a shadow of reason for saying it is? I have not been able to discover it. Is it not manifestly right to deliver up fugitive slaves, for the preservation of the great, the momentous interests of these States? And if this be so, is it not in accordance with right and duty, as well as with the Constitution, to make a law providing for that result? Is there any law of God or of nature against this? Is there any law of God, against keeping lawful compacts? Is there any law of God against doing those things which every man must do, or cause greater evil by not doing them? I do not so understand it. I do not understand what sort of sin that is, which consists in not making a bad state of things immeasurably worse.

When I learned in the newspapers the novel doctrine that the Constitution of my country was in conflict with the law of my Maker—when I first learned it, I said to myself, is it possible, that from the high places of legislation—from the very hall of the Senate, a man in the exalted and honorable position, whence his voice is heard by all the people, ventures to propound such a doctrine as this? The thought struck me, that perhaps he was not counting without his host; perhaps I was but imperfectly informed; perhaps at the North there is a degree of infatuation and fanaticism of which I had not dreamed. In these visions of my fears, I felt very much as if I had heard a summons to rebellion; I felt very much as if I had heard the cry of revolt sounding through the land, and entering every dwelling, and seen the standard of revolt waving on every hill. It seemed like Revolution, desolating our happy homes, with its carnage and blood. And, sir, there is no want of tendency in that doctrine to give full reality to these anticipations and these forebodings. Let the doctrine be inculcated—let it be believed at the North—let the northern conscience, whether perverted or unperverted, receive such a doctrine, and what may we expect? We may expect rebellion and intestine war. And when I think of the morality, the ethics of this subject in our religious newspapers, and in

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pulpits, which have been given up to those who choose to advocate this doctrine; when I think how little truth and argument have been employed on the other side, I almost wonder that the curse of war is not over the Union, directed against the power of law, and against every principle upon which our nation's greatness and glory depend. Thus far we have passed through the storm; I hope it is over; I am afraid it is not; I am afraid there are evils yet to come—but I think the prospect brightens; I do think that we have reason to believe, that though surrounded with distracting causes and influences, the people are coming to right views, and that here we have indications that the God, of our fathers cares for us. He is, I trust, restraining the madness of the people, and that in his own good time, amid the roaring of the tempest, he will say to the winds, cease, and to the waves, be still! Stand, then, my fellow-citizens, by law! stand by the Constitution of our country—that Constitution, why, sir, like the atmosphere around us, it blesses us every breath we draw; we wake, we sleep, we talk, we think, we hope, we rejoice, every moment under its influence. Our commerce that floats on every sea, our trade in city and in country, the harvests that wave in our fields, the cattle on our thousand hills, aye, sir, every flower that blooms in our gardens, and every bird that sings in these green trees, all, all are under the guardianship of the Constitution. It is like the Providence of that God whose gift it is, and which watches us with an eye that never slumbers, and protects us with a hand that is never weary. What would become of us if the Constitution were trampled in the dust? No, sir,—as has been said, so say I, with all my heart and soul, if any of my fellow-citizens do not value the Constitution enough to defend it, they are not worthy of the blessings it gives them. (*Cheers.*) I say again, let us stand by the Constitution and the law, and as some one has said, as near as I can remember, "I would not merely protect it with the shield of honest Ajax, I would protect it also with a wall of brass, and when this would not serve the purpose of protection, then would I circle it with the living hearts of my countrymen." In its defence, I, we, all, would rally, till the last pulse of life and the last drop of blood were expended, to save the Constitution!"

[The learned Doctor took his seat, while the audience manifested their assent to his doctrines and admiration of his eloquence by the loudest applause.]

The audience having called upon Judge DUTTON, Professor of Law in Yale College, he arose and said;—

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I was about to remark, Mr. President, that if it was not so late it would give me the greatest pleasure to state that I have examined what is called the Fugitive Slave Law, and compared it with the Constitution of the United States, and I fully believe that it is constitutional. I will further say that I am fully satisfied that all further agitations are inexpedient and ought to be dropped. I have listened with pleasure to the resolutions which have been read, and fully approve of them all. I should be very glad if the meeting would be satisfied with this expression of my views, but as it seemed to wish for an expression of my views a little more fully, I will say, that I have long been of the opinion that the citizens of New Haven owed it as a duty to themselves to express their views as regards the compromise acts. As New Haven is the largest city in Connecticut, so it is most proper that the views and feelings of Connecticut should be represented by New Haven. It is so distinguished as a place of learning, and the peculiarity connected with the South in consequence of the institutions located here, it is better known to the citizens of the South than any other place of its size in New England. So I think it is peculiarly proper that a meeting of the citizens of New Haven should be held to express their views.

With regard to the question before us, it seems to me very plain and simple. It is this—every man of us has taken an oath to abide by the Constitution of the United States, and has solemnly agreed to comply with every provision. You and I have not only entered into a contract, but we have entered into a contract under oath. I ask you, is there a man here who would make a contract and fail to execute it? I ask you if you would not fail of an ordinary contract with your fellow-men, will you fail of a contract you have made with your fellow States. It seems to me that no sound-minded man can hesitate. We are not only morally bound because we have entered into a contract, but we are bound by the very genius of our institutions—by their peculiar excellence, leaving as they do, every department to make its own laws. It has been well remarked that we have no more to do with slavery in the South than we have with slavery in Africa; we are no more responsible for slavery in Georgia or South Carolina, than with slavery in Algiers or Spain. Does it give us any right to interfere because we have entered into a contract? You have formed a sort of partnership; many of you are partners connected in business with others—does that give you any right to interfere with your partners domestic arrangements? To say how he shall treat his wife, or how he shall treat his child? Does it give you any right to go into his

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family and sow the seeds of discord because you have entered into a commercial partnership with him? Is our Constitution any thing more than a mutual compact? Have we any more right to interfere with the affairs of Georgia and South Carolina than we had before the Union was formed? The Union was formed for certain great objects, and each State is just as independent as Spain, or Russia, or any other country, in other respects. We are the last nation on the earth to allow any other nation to interfere with our peculiar notions or peculiar laws. Some have an idea that our females are in a worse state than the slaves of the South. Suppose in some parts of the country conventions should be held, speeches made, and handbills, pamphlets, and newspapers printed, for the purpose of revolutionizing the whole country; that it should be claimed that the females were in a state of degradation too intolerable to be borne; and suppose they should send their missionaries to persuade our wives and daughters suffering these indignities to leave us, and they should advise them to go off, and when they got over the State line should refuse to give them up; (*merriment*) I think you would not stand it; I think there would be another meeting larger than this—in which event I am quite sure the voice of the President of this meeting would be heard. (*Loud cheering and laughter.*) I will say nothing of the active part another gentleman who has addressed this meeting at very great length would take.

When we consider this subject it is well to bring these matters home and see how we feel. Gentlemen at the South who have been accustomed all their lives to slavery, (as suggested, as to the right or wrong of the institution, we have nothing to say) brought up all their lives in the belief that the institution is right or so fastened upon them that they cannot avoid it—how do they feel? Just as we should feel if people undertook to interfere with our rights, and to injure us in regard to our institutions.

I will make only one suggestion more—it is this. I ask whether this is a time of all the times that ever should be selected, when any thing should be done to break up the union of the States? Who are the men who are undertaking to sow the seeds of disunion? They are men who claim to be philanthropists, and to seek the best interests of the human race. I regret there is such a tendency in philanthropy to degenerate into meddlesome interference with the affairs of others. The philanthropist seeks the best good of the whole human race, and not of one class exclusively, or one color. What kind of an astronomer would he be, who should spend all his time looking at the black spots on the sun, without regard-

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ing the residue of his shining surface? Genuine philanthropy seeks the best good of the whole. I ask then, is this true philanthropy? Was there ever a time on the face of the earth when a nation had ever such an opportunity as ours now possesses to bless the whole human race? Look at its extent —reaching to both oceans, stretching on the north to the frozen regions and on the south to the torrid zone! Here we invite all the oppressed on the face of the world, to come and enjoy the blessings we enjoy. Would it be philanthropic to destroy all this, and say to the oppressed of all Europe and Asia (for we are extending in that way, and the oppressed of Asia will come,) that they shall come no longer? Or if they do come, that they shall be more harrassed and oppressed than they were in their own land? No, sir—give me the philanthophy that looks at the whole human race. Continue all these blessings and all these privileges which no people ever possessed before. Is not this true philanthropy? Is all this to be broken up? Is it to go for nothing merely because one peculiar race which some are disposed to believe is oppressed may be benefited? Away with such pseudo philanthropy as this! It seems to me the citizens of New Haven do right to come forward and express their sentiments on this important subject. Not only principles, but interests, are at stake. Interest alone ought not to be regarded, but when interest and right go hand in hand, we are a foolish people not to regard them. Where will be our connections in business?— our institutions of learning, which spread light abroad—how will they be sustained? Where will men come from who have hitherto supported our college and other literary institutions? Have not many of them been from the South? Have we not been able to do much towards blessing and enlightening the whole country! It seems to me that if any people should come out and declare their devoted attachment to the Union and their fraternal feelings for the people of the United States, they are the people of New Haven. (*Applause.*)

Col. Babcock, of the Palladium, came forward at the call of the meeting, and remarked:

At this late hour, so far beyond the usual hour of adjournment, it is not my purpose to occupy more than five or ten minutes of your time. But in so brief a space, I shall be afforded the opportunity of avowing my approbation of the general objects of this meeting, which I understand to be the expression of our unfaltering determination to support in good faith, and with patriotic zeal, the Constitution and laws of the country, and to abide by, and maintain without equivocation or reser-

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vation, those recent acts of Congress termed the compromise measures. (*Cheers.*) The resolutions of this meeting, as I understand them from their reading this evening, avow these purposes, and therein they must commend themselves to our approbation. I should be glad if there was time for me to speak of these measures somewhat in detail. Although many of us may differ upon some points of them, yet there can be no essential difference of opinion upon the great and important questions that have brought us together this evening, (*Applause.*) They are the faithful support of this compromise, and the discouragement, in every proper way, of every thing which tends to weaken the bonds of our national Union; (*cheers,*) a union upon which hang the hopes, not only of ourselves and our posterity, but of the whole human race. Recreant should we be to the memory of our fathers, and to our own best interests—sacred, civil and religious—if we refused, whenever occasion offered, to express our loyalty to the Union, and our gratitude to the self-sacrificing patriots who formed it.

Ours is the noblest experiment of self-government that man has ever attempted. I recollect when a mere youth reading the work of an eminent historian, who wrote not far from the period of the American Revolution, in which he laid down the sentiment as an axiom—that "Republics exist only in speculation"—in other words, that a pure republic never was or could be a substantial reality. This declaration made a strong impression on my mind when a boy, and I have never forgotten it. Could that writer have lived in this day, and witnessed the growth and success of our country—have seen it stretching from ocean to ocean—a representative government, sustained by laws instead of bayonets—a government in which the people are the only sovereigns—I have felt that he would be disposed to blot from his page a declaration thus far so clearly refuted by American history. Let it not be said after all that he had more of sagacity than we have of patriotism. (*Applause.*) Let us conciliate, compromise, forbear, ere we see the tie that unites us, as a great and glorious nation, severed or weakened.

I repeat that I am glad that we have come up here—men of all trades and professions—to renew our pledges of fidelity to the Constitution, and of good faith towards all our sister States; and chiefly glad because I think we shall strengthen the hands and hearts of our Union friends at the South, who are contending manfully against agitators and demagogues in their midst. I did not for a moment believe that there was any immediate danger to our Union, until some time after the passage of the compromise bills. Then I saw that the violent agitators at the

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South were aiming at disunion, and were seeking to drive the union men to the wall. Then all my sympathies became aroused for the latter, and I felt that we owed it to them, not only to remove every obstacle in the way of their success, but also to aid them directly by every honorable means within our reach, and especially we assure them, as we propose to do tonight, that we intend to keep inviolate our obligations to our sister States.

It is proper that the Union men of Connecticut, should respond to the fraternal sentiments of the Union men of the South; for our glorious State has been ever true to the principles of the Revolution of 1776, and to the Union of the States. Though we boast of no renowned battle fields, yet we know that the blood of our troops in the war of Independence has flowed on every plain, where the clash of arms had been heard, from Bunker Hill to Yorktown. (*Loud applause.*) No State save Massachusetts, contributed more men or means to achieve our freedom than Connecticut.

Our Independence was won, and our Constitution established by the men of the North, and the men of the South. Let us ever cherish the recollection, and perpetuate the sympathies which common dangers and common success have engendered. In the language of the poet may we often inquire—

"Say, can the South sell out her share in Bunker's hoary height,
And can the North give up her boast in Yorktown's closing fight,
Can ye divide with equal hand a heritage of graves,
And rend in twain the starry flag that proudly o'er them waves?"

(*Cheers.*)

In conclusion, let us remember that we cannot perpetuate LIBERTY, without holding fast to our UNION. In the thrilling language of our present Secretary of State, used on an occasion of great interest—language which has long since been impressed on my memory and on my heart, and is doubtless familiar to us all, let each one of us be able to say from the depths of his soul—"When my eyes shall be turned for the last time to behold the sun in the heavens, may I not behold him shining on the broken and disordered fragments of a once glorious Union—on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent—on a land rent with civil feuds, and drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood."

Let their last feeble, lingering, glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the Republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre—not a stripe erased or polluted—nor a single star obscured—bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory, as "What is all this worth?" nor those other words of delusion and folly, "Liberty first

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and Union afterwards,"—but every where spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart—"*Liberty and Union, now and forever*, one and inseparable." (*Prolonged applause.*)

The resolutions were then unanimously adopted, and the proceedings ordered to be published, under the direction of the "Union Safety Committee."

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